

# Plant Fact Sheet

## CREEPING BLUESTEM

*Schizachyrium scoparium*  
(Michx.) Nash var.  
*stoloniferum* (Nash) J. Wipff  
Plant Symbol = SCSCS3

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data  
Center



From Hitchcock (1950)  
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### Alternate Names

creeping bluestem, *Andropogon stolonifer*

### Uses

Livestock readily grazes creeping bluestem throughout the year. It retains its nutritive value and stays green during the winter.

### Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values.

### Description

Grass Family (Poaceae). Creeping bluestem is a native, warm-season, rhizomatous perennial grass. The height is between 2 and 6 feet. The leaf blade is 1/4 to 3/8 inch wide; often 2 feet long with v-shaped or flat; abruptly tapered at tip. The leaf sheath is strongly flattened; often light purplish at base; upper parts of sheath, collar, and lower part of blade very hairy. The stem is solitary or few. The seedhead is several racemes, each 1 to 1-1/2 inches long, droop slightly at maturity; seedheads are commonly 1 to 2 feet long.

**Distribution:** For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

### Management

Where double chopping with heavy rolling cutters has controlled saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), creeping bluestem is one of the first plants to become re-established if grazing is deferred 6 to 8 months following the treatment. Plants are weakened if more than 50 to 60 percent of the current year's growth by weight is removed by grazing.

### Establishment

Rhizomes grow actively in December and January, 12 to 14 inches in a single season. New leaf growth starts in January and February. Leaves stay green as long as 17 months. Basal leaves are usually only 4 inches long in 4 to 5 weeks. Creeping bluestem forms dense colonies and grows best in open areas, but tolerates 25- to 30-percent shade. Pure stands yield about 2 tons of air-dry forage per acre. Seed production is uncertain and erratic. It grows on a wide variety of soils in the sandhills and flatwoods.

### Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Please contact your local NRCS Field Office.

### Reference

Leithead, H.L., L.L. Yarlett, & T.N. Shiflett. 1976. 100 native forage grasses in 11 southern states. USDA SCS Agriculture Handbook No. 389, Washington, DC.

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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